

Monthly Newsletter

110th Congress – February 2008

MESSAGE FROM THE CAUCUS LEADERSHIP

As the chairs and vice chairs of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus, we'd like to welcome you to the February edition of the Caucus Monthly Newsletter. Below you will find the latest news in diabetes, summaries of recent diabetes events, and updates on the legislative priorities of the Caucus. We hope that you and your staff find this newsletter helpful and informative.

To coincide with the new year, the Caucus has two exciting announcements:

- The Congressional Diabetes Caucus website has been on hiatus and was recently re-launched. Please check it out at www.house.gov/degette/diabetes for Caucus news and other pertinent diabetes information. Please consider placing a link to the Caucus website on your Member's website.
- Also, please note a new section of the newsletter entitled "Did You Know???" Each month the Caucus will highlight a legislative priority area or an interesting fact about diabetes policy. Please contact Heather Foster in Rep. DeGette's office or Olivia Kurtz in Rep. Castle's office if your office would like the Caucus to feature a particular policy concern in the new section.

Please contact Heather Foster at heather.foster@mail.house.gov or 5-4431 in Rep. DeGette's office if you would like more information about the Caucus or would like to join.

Rep. Diana DeGette
Co-Chair

Rep. Michael N. Castle
Co-Chair

Rep. Xavier Becerra
Vice-Chair

Rep. Mark Steven Kirk
Vice-Chair



Diabetes News

- [Study Shows Strides in Diabetes Care](#)
- [Diabetes guidelines: Screen more people earlier](#)
- [Caffeine May Hamper Diabetes Control](#)
- [Increasing Rates of Diabetes Found Among Older Americans](#)
- [Deep sleep and diabetes](#)
- [Delaying Diabetes](#)
- [U.S. Study Shows Diabetes Increasing](#)



Diabetes Briefings

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Please check the Diabetes Caucus website for upcoming events at www.house.gov/degette/diabetes.

RECENT EVENTS

- *Diabetes is Costing Americans \$174 Billion Annually*

Earlier this month, the American Diabetes Association released a new cost estimate for diabetes, "The Economic Costs of Diabetes in the U.S. in 2007." The study estimates that diabetes is costing Americans \$174 billion annually. The ADA, the Congressional Diabetes Caucus leadership, and diabetes experts from the CDC and NIH discussed the economic impact of this compelling new data during a congressional briefing on January 23. The study reveals that the direct economic costs associated with diabetes have reached unprecedented levels, increasing 32 percent since the last estimate was completed five years ago. Medical expenditures of care for people with diabetes are estimated to be \$116 billion, with a disproportionate percentage of the costs resulting from treatment and hospitalization of people with diabetes-related complications. The findings also suggest that 1 out of every 5 health care dollars is spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes. Considering that an additional 6 million more people are believed to have diabetes but have not yet been diagnosed, the study estimates that the actual cost of diabetes may greatly exceed \$174 billion. The annual estimated costs of diabetes are available for each state and congressional district, and can be accessed by visiting the ADA's website: www.diabetes.org/cost and using the cost calculator tool.



Did You Know???

FASCINATING FACT

- CMS issued a National Coverage Decision (NCD) in 2006 providing for Home Health Visits to a Blind Diabetic. The purpose is to assist diabetics with prefilling syringes. **However, CMS does not cover, under Part B, adaptive devices that would help a blind, or partially sighted, diabetic administer their own medications**, under the theory that the adaptive device is simply part of the syringe (note, however, that Part D does now cover syringes, but does not appear to expand this to adaptive devices).

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- H.R. 2762, reauthorizing the *Special Diabetes Programs for Type I Diabetes and Indians*. The bill would reauthorize the special diabetes programs for type 1 research and prevention/treatment for Native Americans for five years, with an increase in funding. The bill includes a five-year reauthorization at increased funding levels for both programs. The bill currently has 231 cosponsors
- H.R. 1647, *including podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the Medicaid Program*. The bill would classify podiatrists as physicians for purposes of direct reimbursement through the Medicaid program. The bill currently has 190 cosponsors.
- H.R. 2210, the *“Diabetes Prevention Access and Care Act of 2007.”* The Diabetes Prevention Access and Care Act is designed to promote research, treatment, and education regarding diabetes in minority populations. This specific focus will help us address the unique challenges faced by minority populations and provide more effective treatment and education. The bill currently has 70 cosponsors.
- H.R. 4218, the *“Medicare Diabetes Self-Management Training Act of 2007.”* The bill would recognize certified diabetes educators as providers for Medicare diabetes outpatient self-management training services. The bill currently has 6 cosponsors. Please look for a Dear Colleague letter in the next few weeks regarding the bill.

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